

# Colleagues Debate AI Hiring Ethics

Listening · C1 · Conversation · 470 words

*Three colleagues debate using AI to screen job applicants, weigh speed against fairness and agree to a trial.*

## Speakers

**Sarah** (female, adult)    **Tom** (male, adult)    **Alex** (male, adult)

## TRANSCRIPT

**Sarah:** Hey, you two. I was just reading about that AI hiring tool we're thinking of rolling out. Sounds revolutionary, right? It analyses video interviews for soft skills like confidence and enthusiasm.

**Tom:** Absolutely, Sarah. We're drowning in applications these days. This could streamline everything – flag the top candidates in minutes, not hours. Imagine the time we'd save for actual human interactions later on.

**Alex:** Hold your horses, Tom. Isn't this just kicking the can down the road on ethics? These systems aren't magic; they're trained on data that mirrors our world's inequalities. What if it systematically weeds out non-native speakers or introverts?

**Sarah:** Mm-hm, I get the concern, Alex, but the vendor swears it's been audited for bias. They use diverse datasets now. And let's be honest, our current process isn't flawless – recruiters have unconscious prejudices too.

**Alex:** Audited how? By whom? It's the tip of the iceberg. Remember the Amazon debacle a few years back? Their AI learned to penalise women because the training data was mostly male resumes. If we'd implemented that without scrutiny, we'd be liable for discrimination lawsuits.

**Tom:** Yeah, but that's ancient history. They've iterated since then. And Alex, humans aren't objective either – we favour people who look like us, talk like us. AI could level the playing field, make decisions based on merit, not gut feelings.

**Sarah:** Exactly, Tom. It's not about replacing us; it's augmenting. Picture this: if the AI shortlists fairly, we focus on nuanced stuff like cultural fit. Plus, candidates get instant feedback – that's a win for them.

**Alex:** Cultural fit? That's code for 'do they blend in?' And instant feedback sounds great until you realise it's generated by the same opaque black box. What if it tells a qualified minority candidate they're 'lacking warmth' because they don't smile enough on camera? We'd never know why.

**Tom:** Fair point – transparency's key. But wouldn't mandating explainable AI solve that? Like, it spits out the reasoning behind scores.

**Alex:** In theory, yeah. But in practice? These models are so complex, even developers can't always unpack them. It's like trying to reverse-engineer a neural net blindfolded.

**Sarah:** Whoa, hadn't thought of it that way. Still, piloting it small-scale lets us test. We monitor outcomes, tweak as needed. If disparities emerge, we pull the plug. Risk-averse, but progressive.

**Tom:** Right, and ethically, aren't we obliged to innovate? Sticking to outdated methods because of hypotheticals – that's stagnation. Our competitors are already doing it.

**Alex:** Obligated? Debatable. What about dignity? Reducing humans to data points feels dehumanising. Interviews should probe character, not just patterns.

**Sarah:** I see both sides, really. But if we don't adapt, we fall behind. Let's at least trial it with oversight – metrics on demographics, appeal processes. Sound reasonable?

**Tom:** Agreed. Oversight makes it ethical.

**Alex:** Reluctantly, yeah. But I'll be watching like a hawk.

**Sarah:** Deal. Coffee's on me if it flops.